

COMMISSIONERS APPROVAL

GRANDSTAFF 

ROKOSCH 

THOMPSON 

CHILCOTT 

DRISCOLL 

PLETTENBERG (Clerk & Recorder)

Members Present..... Commissioner Carlotta Grandstaff,
Commissioner Jim Rokosch, Commissioner Alan Thompson, Commissioner Greg
Chilcott and Commissioner Kathleen Driscoll

Date.....September 2, 2008

Minutes: Beth Perkins

► The Board met for a public hearing on the establishment of fees for a food safety class. Present were Environmental Health Director Lea Jordan and Administrative Assistant Glenda Wiles.

Commissioner Grandstaff opened the public hearing.

Glenda stated the public notice has been run two times. Lea stated through these fees people will receive a booklet, staff time, materials and a manager workshop. The fees are to cover the costs.

Commissioner Grandstaff opened the hearing to public comment and hearing none, then closed public comment.

Commissioner Chilcott made a motion to establish the fees for a food safety class. Commissioner Rokosch seconded the motion and all voted 'aye'.

► The Board met for discussion and decision on the Planning Department's prioritization and Contracting Development Review. Present were Interim Planning Director Renee Lemon, Project Planner Jen De Groot, Planner Randy Fifrick, Planner Vanessa Morrell, Senior Planner Shaun Morrell, Planner John Lavey, Planning Board Members Les Rutledge, Ben Hillicoss and Chip Pigman.

Commissioner Grandstaff called the meeting to order.

Renee stated subdivision review, exemption, floodplain issues and zoning are a full workload. She stated with the Streamside Setback Committee, they have one more meeting prior to the requested draft being due.

Commissioner Thompson asked how the setbacks are affected with the vote in November for the Growth Policy. Renee replied it is a legal question that Civil Counsel has not answered yet. Commissioner Rokosch stated in the Big Hole, setbacks were not affected by their Growth Policy. Commissioner Thompson stated his reason for asking is setting priorities when they could possibly be wiped out.

Commissioner Driscoll stated she sees the need to set a pace for planning in the valley. She would like to see it all brought together. Commissioner Rokosch stated he agreed. He stated there are a lot of needs and potential sources of resources to accomplish those needs. As a county, the Board can find other resources to try to accomplish land use planning and growth. He discussed the University of Montana Land Use Law Clinic and model subdivision regulations being drafted by MACo. The Department of Commerce also has resources available.

Commissioner Grandstaff stated prior to any direction she would like the new Planning Director available. Commissioner Driscoll stated she would like to hear more interaction from the Planning Staff prior to the new Planning Director taking office.

Commissioner Grandstaff asked John about contracting out for subdivision review and how many should be contracted out. John replied they did have some discussion about it but did not decide anything. He discussed the amount of subdivisions proposed and expressed his concern if they start to contract them out what would happen with Staff being able to do the reviews in the future. Commissioner Grandstaff asked John if he sees the need to have subdivision review stay primarily in Planning. John replied yes. Commissioner Rokosch stated Staff should be directed more towards those efforts. He sees some questions such as should Staff outsource minor subdivision reviews and limit the number of major subdivision reviews. John replied he would prefer a pick and choose method for example those with no major issues could be outsourced. Commissioner Grandstaff stated if there were definite parameters it could limit the number of projects as well as force staff to take on more than they can handle. John agreed. Commissioner Rokosch stated no matter what, staff will have some role with all subdivision reviews even those contracted out. He further discussed fees to fund the work. Renee stated the fees need to be a separate line item.

Commissioner Rokosch asked for any additional issues at this time. Randy stated at the pre-application meeting the applicants could be told it would be handled by a consultant. The whole process is going to take time even if it is outsourced. John stated the customer service projects take time as well such as plat research. It is something that needs to be considered. The Board agreed.

Vanessa recommended the Board house the Open Lands Program within the Planning Department. She stated it is fairly complex and needs to be administered properly. Commissioner Grandstaff stated Vanessa has done a tremendous job with establishing the program and thanked her for all her hard work. Vanessa stated the program is at the point where it could be administered by another staff member. Commissioner Chilcott agreed with Vanessa that the program should stay in the Planning Department.

Randy stated his feeling is everything is coming all at once and it needs to be slowed down a bit. He would like to see zoning first and then the Streamside Setback regulations. Commissioner Grandstaff agreed with Randy. Commissioner Driscoll commented about recent staff turn-over and noted it is a challenge.

Commissioner Grandstaff stated she understands Randy's concern with pushing forward. Commissioner Rokosch stated he also understands, however zoning and growth management have been around for over fifty years. He would caution to think of prioritization as a timeline since it doesn't really work like that. He stated they have placed all the eggs in the zoning basket. His fear is getting to Draft ZZZ over the next ten years and needing to continue. There will always be fear with zoning. He stated there are many ways zoning can be shot down with the law. There is a need to keep moving on and develop more tools than zoning to manage growth.

Commissioner Chilcott stated Randy makes a good point. There have been quite a few attempts and they have put a lot of resources into zoning. They have to stay focused with all the projects ongoing. He stated the Open Lands Program needs to stay in house and do as much planning and subdivision review in house as possible.

Commissioner Rokosch stated as far as subdivision review and regulations, he would like to hear comments from staff. John stated MACo will not have their model regulations until next April therefore, would not recommend taking on that project until the model regulations are complete. Shaun stated he thought zoning would be in place prior to revised subdivision regulations so they would complement each other.

Commissioner Grandstaff stated the prioritization should be zoning and then revised subdivision regulations. Commissioner Rokosch stated in an ideal world it would be great to take it on, however it is not possible at this time. Further discussion followed regarding revising subdivision regulations. Commissioner Rokosch stated one concern is pedestrian-bicycle pathways.

Les stated the role of the Planning Board in future planning is changed with severe economic down turn. The term of long range planning has taken a different slant. He asked if the Board would charge the Planning Board with additional tasks. With the economic change and gas costs, perhaps the Board would like to get the land use subcommittee and the sustainability committee together. Commissioner Grandstaff suggested possibly working on the revision for subdivision regulations. Commissioner Driscoll stated she is familiar with the land use group but would like to hear from Planning Staff. Shaun stated there is only so much they can ask from a volunteer board.

Also every time projects are outsourced, it also adds to the workload. Renee stated she would not recommend it for language writing but for ideas, it could work. It would be a project and there is concern with current staff turnover and the increasing work load.

Ben stated the land use subcommittee was working on zoning regulations. Once a consultant was involved, they backed off and have become inactive. He stated for subdivision regulations, it is like an elephant. He stated we can't eat a whole elephant but we could take small bites. He stated the subcommittee was keeping up to date with the Planning Department, draft zoning regulations and possible revised subdivision regulations. He stated they have not met lately. There is a set of things they are working on but without progress. He requested the Board clarify who is going to work on the priorities as well as what those are.

Commissioner Grandstaff stated she is uncomfortable setting priorities at this time without input from the new Planning Director. Further discussion followed regarding another time to set priorities for the Planning Department.

Ben stated the message sent out should be clear from the Board. Things should move forward regardless of the election in November. Commissioner Grandstaff stated the priority at this time should be zoning.

- ▶ Commissioner Chilcott attended a BREDD meeting in Missoula at noon.
- ▶ Commissioner Thompson attended a HRC meeting in the afternoon.